

Missouri Division of Workforce Development
Skilled Workforce Initiative
Community Solutions for Low-Income Individuals
Competitive Funding Proposal
Program Year 2006
Guidelines

The state will make up to \$3,000,000 available under this initiative, to fund up to 6 demonstration proposals. These initiatives will be funded to a maximum of \$1,000,000 based on need. Applications must be received no later than March 31, 2006 and are subject to availability of funds. The Division of Workforce Development (DWD) reserves the right to limit awards within local areas in an effort to evenly distribute funds statewide. Grant applications are subject to evaluation and approval by an interagency team including state level staff from DWD and Family Support Division (FSD).

Eligible applicants are the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs). Competitive grants will be awarded to LWIBs that have designed a comprehensive, innovative and collaborative project that will focus on individuals receiving Temporary Assistance benefits, but may also include other low-income individuals including but not limited to non-custodial parents, ex-offenders, and food stamp recipients. Successful applicants will identify and fulfill a specific need for service among the many services available to this target population. Priority will be given to those projects demonstrating innovation and originality of design.

I. Executive Summary

Please include a short description of the project, local collaboration, outcomes and leveraging of local resources including local activity funds (10% of three Title 1B formula funding streams).

II. Project Narrative

Purpose

The primary purpose of this Request for Application (RFA) is to solicit proposals for proven service approaches and strategies that help Temporary Assistance recipients (including those with multiple barriers to becoming employed) prepare to enter, succeed, and advance in the workplace. This RFA will provide resources to expand and enhance existing service delivery efforts to more fully the needs of the Temporary Assistance population prior to entry into work and during employment. The state intends for the key outcomes of this initiative to be improved job placement and retention of Temporary Assistance participants, as well as, an increase in Missouri's Temporary Assistance work participation rate. It is important to stay focused on this outcome, as the required work participation rate is likely to increase under the federal reauthorization of TANF.

In addition, limited funding will be available to address community needs that would help all low-income parents stay connected to and be successful in the work force. These needs could include, but not be limited to, childcare arrangements and capacity, transportation needs, or other work supports, as identified by the community.

Strategic Partners

Firmly established and committed community partnerships are vital to the success of individual projects and service delivery as a whole. Many Temporary Assistance clients need an array of services from many providers and benefit greatly from integrated case planning and service delivery. Proposals should include other service agencies or vendors that offer essential expertise and should outline the community partnerships relevant to the project design, including consumer groups and businesses. Key agencies for partnerships may include adult education, community action agency; Missouri Career Center; Family Support Division office; mental health and substance abuse agencies, domestic violence providers, public and private providers of vocational rehabilitation services, faith-based groups, father support groups, Head Start, Department of Corrections and many other private providers and clinicians. To this end, applicants that provide evidence of community collaboration in program design and service delivery will be scored higher than those who use a silo approach. Documentation of community collaboration can include anything from letters of support to formal interagency agreement(s) or other comparable documents.

Statement of Need

The TANF population is quite diverse both within and across localities. Some may have moved readily into the workforce. Other low-income clients may face only one or two issues that impede employment, while some may face multiple issues. Those with significant issues often need stabilization services before they can enter or fully participate in the workforce, as well as specialized employment services to support a work placement and ongoing employment. Barriers to employment are both personal and family/situational in nature and may include: *transportation; child care; learning disabilities; substance abuse; mental illness; mental retardation; low educational levels; attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder; medical (physical) problems; social issues; domestic violence; family issues; or limited English proficiency*

Under this request, applicants should examine and carefully consider all of the barriers that prevent Temporary Assistance recipients and other low-income individuals from entering, succeeding and advancing in the workplace. Proposals should be tailored to address the most prevalent client issues in the community and not attempt to “be all things to all people.” At a minimum, the state is interested in receiving proposals to serve: *sanctioned individuals; participants with long-term barriers to employment (pick from list above based on local need); participants dually enrolled in the Career Assistance Program and the Workforce Investment Act; long-term Temporary Assistance recipients, which we are defining as receiving Temporary Assistance for 36 months; non-custodial parents; food stamp recipients; and others with limited income.*

If funding is also being requested to address community needs to help low income parents in the workforce, the statement of need should cover that request.

Skills Gap information is necessary to show the needs of local business and industry for target groups identified. Discuss how the project will complement the needs of the community through services that lead to self-sufficiency.

Project Design

When designing their programs, regions should consider exemplary and innovative strategies that will assist in the success of the program. Successful applicants will include strategies that address:

- **Customer outreach** (reaching out to participants, businesses, service providers and training providers)
- **Intensive pre-employment services** (comprehensive screening and assessments for diverse employment barriers; services that stabilize an individual's situation so that he/she can participate in or retain employment; intensive work preparation or work adjustment services, including education, hard and soft skills training)
- **Post-employment work supports** (continuing to help workers once they have found employment to ensure continued employment; development of post-employment "service packages" including counseling; job coaching/mentoring, child care; transportation assistance; skills training, etc.)
- **Assisting with local economic development** (meeting the demands of local businesses, including job development and placement services, sectoral initiatives and the development of industry-based career ladders)
- **Specific community needs** (for supporting the low-income workforce if funding is also being requested under that provision)

Duration, Timeline, Project Goals

Applications will include a timeline for the project, including milestone; short and long-term goals for the individuals served and for the overall project, certificates, career ladder objectives or recognized credentials earned if applicable, and a statement of how the project fits into the local plan.

Non-duplication of Existing Services

Funding awarded through this RFA will only be used to cover costs appropriate to the program design and the delivery of new services to the Temporary Assistance population. Proposals should complement and not supplant or duplicate current services to Temporary Assistance recipients.

Exception: Consideration will be given to alternate methods of providing current services, if the proposal shows that this will help the community better support the low-income workforce.

Successful Engagement

Applications will include a strategy for the successful engagement of referred Temporary Assistance recipients and enrolled CAP program participants. The state intends for the key outcomes of this initiative to be improved job placement and retention of CAP participants, as well as, an increase in Missouri's work participation rate. It is important to stay focused on this outcome, as the required work participation rate is likely to increase under the federal reauthorization of TANF.

Performance

Applications will include at a minimum:

- Past performance of the program operator. Priority will be given to program operators who have successfully administered projects serving Temporary Assistance recipients or other low-income target populations.
- Performance measures directly related to the immediate goals of the project (i.e. percentage of CAP referrals successfully engaged within 30 days of referral).
- Performance measures related to the longer-term goals of the project (i.e. percentage of CAP participants who left public assistance due to increased earnings by the end of the project).
- Other performance measures defined by the LWIB

Staff Qualifications

Provide staff qualifications of key personnel for the project, including resumes. Personnel may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Project Director
- b) Fiscal Officer
- c) Case manager(s)
- d) Counselor(s)

III. Use of Funds

A minimum of 70% of the individuals to be served must be Temporary Assistance recipients referred to the Career Assistance Program (CAP) for case management services. All activities and services provided to this population must be allowed under current CAP policy. (The state will consider waiving CAP policies that are not mandated by TANF regulations or FSD policy. Requests for specific waivers needed to implement proposed projects must be included as an attachment to the project proposal.) All expenditures for this population must be allowable under TANF regulations and CAP policy. Funds requested for serving other identified target groups will require similar expenditure allowability rules, as applicable.

IV. Budget

Include budget narrative that contains:

- A narrative that justifies all line items.
- A statement of use of other available resources. The state would like to expand the available resources by leveraging other funding and in-kind contributions. To this end, applicants with other funds will be scored higher than those who only use funds under this proposal. Applicants will need to identify all funds used: federal, state government, local government, foundation, private, and funds generated by the initiative. Applicants will need to describe the utilization of these funds in their proposal.
- A line item form.
- A discussion of sustainability beyond the end date of the funds being requested.

V. Project Reporting

- **Local Oversight of the Project**

Applicants should assume that DWD staff or their designees will conduct at least one on-site project review. This review will focus on the project's performance in meeting the grant's programmatic goals and outcomes, complying with contract requirements, expenditure of grant funds on allowable activities, collaboration with other organizations as required, and methods for assessment of the responsiveness and effectiveness of the services provided. Grants may be subject to additional review at the discretion of DWD.

Grantees must agree to make records available and to provide access to personnel as specified by DWD.

- **Quarterly Performance Reports**

DWD may require, at a minimum, submission of quarterly performance reports on selected performance criteria, including fiscal performance, based on the goals and milestones of the specific project.

- **Data System Tracking**

All participant records related to the project will be maintained on a real-time basis using the Toolbox data system or its successor.

- **End of Year Report**

All projects will be required to submit an end of year report.

VI. Evaluation and Scoring

35% Project Design and Innovation

(Innovative approaches to serving the population and developing appropriate pre-employment and post-employment work supports)

30% Strategic Partnerships

(How well the application addresses the community organization partnerships of the project and in-kind contributions.)

20% Performance/Outcomes

(Short and long-term goals for the individuals served and for the overall project including entered employment, earnings increase, certificates, career ladder objectives or recognized credentials; emphasis on work participation rate)

15% Budget and Financial Accuracy

(Priority will be given to those applications leveraging other funding and in-kind contributions.)

VII. Reservation Clauses

- A. DWD and FSD will make awards based on the merit of the proposal and the recommendation of the review team.
- B. DWD reserves the right not to award any contracts based on the quality of submitted proposals.
- C. DWD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications that do not completely conform to the instructions given in the RFA.
- D. DWD reserves the right to request clarification on any point in any submitted proposal.
- E. All proposals become the property of DWD.

VIII. Procurement

The RFA procurement guidelines prescribed are to be followed.

Submit proposals to the attention of Roderick Nunn, Division of Workforce Development, 421 East Dunklin, P.O. Box 1087, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Email: roderick.nunn@ded.mo.gov Fax: 573/522.9496.

Submit questions regarding this RFA to Roger Baugher, Division of Workforce Development, 421 East Dunklin, P.O. Box 1087, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Email: roger.baugher@ded.mo.gov Telephone: 573/751.7897.